

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 02771 281635Z
ACTION EUR-12

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ATHENS 2771

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS/ ELAB, PINT, GR
SUBJECT: MINISTER OF LABOR ATTACKS LEFTIST AGITATION

1. LABOR MINISTER LASKARIS DELIVERED A HARD-HITTING ATTACK ON LEFTIST AGITATION DURING THE COURSE OF A SPEECH TO NEW DEMOCRACY PARTY OFFICIALS IN MOLOS ON MARCH 26. LASKARIS CONCENTRATED ON THE THEME THAT GREECE HAS MORE TO FEAR FROM THE EXTREME LEFT THAN FROM THE EXTREME RIGHT. AFTER EXTOLLING THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THE GREEK PEOPLE -- THE 85 PERCENT, HE SAID, WHO ARE CONSERVATIVES AND CONSTITUTE THE BACKBONE OF THE NATION -- LASKARIS TURNED TO THE EXTREMISTS OF THE RIGHT AND LEFT.

2. A KEY PASSAGE IN HIS SPEECH IS QUOTED AS FOLLOWS IN PRESS REPORTS: "WE SHOULD BE CONSCIOUS THAT THE EXTREME RIGHTISTS ARE VERY FEW AND POWERLESS TO THREATEN OUR DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES. BUT THEY EXIST AND ARE BECOMING ACTIVE ONLY BECAUSE OF THE EXTREMISTS OF THE COMMUNIST LEFT WHO CONSTITUTE THE REAL DANGER TO THE CONTINUED NORMAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY. THEREFORE, THE LEFTISTS SHOULD STOP AGITATING ABOUT DANGER FROM THE RIGHT AND, MOST
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PAGE 02 ATHENS 02771 281635Z

IMPORTANT, THEY SHOULD NOT BELIEVE THAT THEIR SLOGANS CAN MISDIRECT THE ATTENTION OF THE GOVERNMENT."

3. LASKARIS ALSO TOUCHED BRIEFLY ON THE CURRENT WIDESPREAD LABOR DISPUTES. HE SAID THAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE WORKERS SUPPORTS THE GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC PROGRAM, BUT MANY UNREASONABLE WAGE DEMANDS ARE BEING MADE BY EXTREMISTS FOR POLITICAL, RATHER

THAN ECONOMIC, MOTIVES.

4. COMMENT. THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME THAT LASKARIS HAS
ATTACKED THE COMMUNISTS PUBLICLY. HE HAS TAKEN THEM ON RE-
PEATEDLY ON THE FLOOR OF PARLIAMENT AND ALSO ON OTHER OCCASIONS
WHEN HIS REMARKS HAVE BEEN CARRIED ON TELEVISION. THE THEME THAT
THE EXTREME LEFT RATHER THAN THE EXTREME RIGHT IS THE PRINCIPAL
THREAT TO DEMOCRACY IN GREECE IS ONE WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER
AND OTHER MINISTERS HAVE ALSO BEEN MAKING IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS.
KUBISCH

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